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ABSTRACT

This monograph examines issues of school safety, focusing on the prevention/early intervention end of the continuum of services and on elementary and middle-school age children and youth. It highlights preventive measures schools can take to implement a proactive school-wide system of discipline to ensure school safety. Emphasis is on creating capacity within schools to respond to the full continuum of challenges, from minor repeated noncompliance to repeated physical confrontations. The five chapters that comprise the booklet are: (1) "Developing Positive School-Wide Discipline Systems" (Teri Lewis-Palmer); (2) "Extending School-Wide Systems of Support to Nonclassroom Settings" (Linda Garrison-Harrell and Timothy J. Lewis); (3) "Building Effective Systems of Support at the Classroom Level" (Joseph Wehby and Timothy J. Lewis); (4) "Addressing Challenging Behaviors at the Individual Student Level: Functional Behavioral Assessment" (Lee Kern); and (5) "Creating Individual Student Interventions Based on Functional Behavioral Assessment" (Terrance M. Scott). A conclusion identifies five common themes critical to the success of any school-wide plan. (Contains 25 references.) (DB)

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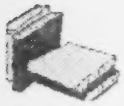

From the Third CCBD Mini-Library Series: What Works for Children and Youth with E/BD: Linking Yesterday and Today with Tomorrow

Safe Schools

School-Wide Discipline Practices

Timothy J. Lewis
George Sugai

ED 435 158

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Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders

Lyndal M. Bullock & Robert A. Gable, *Series Editors*

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Foreword

Public education is in transition. Pressure is mounting to establish and maintain safe and effective schools—schools that produce positive educational outcomes for all students. Recent federal legislation has prompted the redefinition of roles and responsibilities of many school personnel, especially those working with students who have disabilities or are at risk. In serving students labeled "seriously emotionally disturbed," "behaviorally disordered," or "emotionally/behaviorally disordered," we face new challenges to promoting positive approaches to discipline and instruction within and across educational settings.

In the midst of these uncertain times, we would do well to reflect on our history, revisit the theoretical underpinnings of our profession, and renew our commitment to finding ways to better serve students with emotional and behavioral disorders. That is the focus of the Third Mini-Library Series produced by the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders (CCBD). Along with an exploration of historical and contemporary issues within our profession, this monograph series highlights the critical issues of safe schools, school-wide discipline, and positive behavioral supports. The following seven volumes that comprise the series are derived from the 1999 international conference sponsored by CCBD:

- *Developing Positive Behavioral Support for Students with Challenging Behaviors* by George Sugai and Timothy J. Lewis.
- *Educating Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders: Historical Perspective and Future Directions* by Richard J. Whelan and James M. Kauffman.

- *Historical Chronology of the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders: 1964–1999* by Lyndal M. Bullock and Anthony L. "Tony" Menendez.
- *Perspective on Emotional/Behavioral Disorders: Assumptions and Their Implications for Education and Treatment* by C. Michael Nelson, Terrance M. Scott, and Lewis Polsgrove.
- *Psychoeducation: An Idea Whose Time Has Come* by Mary M. Wood, Larry K. Brendtro, Frank A. Fecser, and Polly Nichols.
- *A Revisitation of the Ecological Perspectives on Emotional/Behavioral Disorders: Underlying Assumptions and Implications for Education and Treatment* by Mary Lynn Cantrell, Robert P. Cantrell, Thomas G. Valore, James M. Jones, and Frank A. Fecser.
- *Safe Schools: School-Wide Discipline Practices* by Timothy J. Lewis and George Sugai.

As in previous monographs, we have drawn upon the expertise of CCBD members to assemble information that addresses the needs of professionals responsible for the education and treatment of students at risk and those who have emotional and behavioral disorders. We are grateful for their outstanding contributions to our field.

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Introduction and Overview

School safety is a pressing and complex issue. Consider the following: Almost 16% of high school students and over 16% of eighth grade students report that they have been threatened with a weapon at school (U.S. Department of Education, 1995). It is reported that up to 100,000 students bring weapons to school every day (Sprague & Walker, in review). Over one fourth of eighth grade students report they have been involved in a physical conflict with peers (U.S. Department of Education, 1995). Only one half of school children in the United States report feeling safe in their schools (Leitman & Binns, 1993). Taken together, these data indicate that educators are being forced into new roles that most are not prepared to assume to ensure the well-being of students during school hours.

The reasons for the increase in school violence and other chronic challenging behaviors that create unsafe learning environments are many and varied. Research conducted at the Oregon Social Learning Center clearly point to the link between family stress and dysfunction and the increase in the rates of antisocial behavior displayed by children (see Patterson, Reid, & Dishion, 1992). Biglan and his colleagues at the Oregon Research Institute have also demonstrated a link between the dearth of community resources and the increased rates of antisocial behavior (Biglan, 1995). Unfortunately, there is also evidence that traditional school discipline practices contribute to increased rates of challenging behavior such as aggression and vandalism (Mayer, 1995). To date, once a

pattern of antisocial behavior has been established through adolescence, no intervention strategy has been proven to effectively alter the negative life course these children and youth follow (Tolan & Guerra, 1994).

The best hope we have of creating safe schools is early intervention and prevention (Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group, 1992; Sugai & Horner, 1994; Tolan & Guerra, 1994; Walker, Colvin, & Ramsey, 1995; Walker et al., 1996; Ziglar, Taussig, & Black, 1992). Given the limited amount of success once students enter adolescence, we have chosen to focus this monograph at the prevention/early intervention end of the continuum of services and on elementary and middle school age children and youth. To this end, we highlight preventative measures schools can take to implement a proactive school-wide system of discipline to ensure student safety. Common school safety foci (e.g., use of security guards, locker-less halls, closed campuses) will not be covered; rather, emphasis is on creating capacity within schools to respond to the full continuum of challenges—from minor repeated noncompliance to repeated physical confrontations—with the primary emphasis on prevention. Specifically, we have asked each of the participants in the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders School Safety Strand (Dallas, October 1999) to address a specific school level of intervention leading to the creation of a system of effective behavioral support (EBS) (Lewis & Sugai, 1999; Sugai & Horner, in press).

The first chapter focuses on creating primary prevention strategies through the use of universal instructional strategies within and across all school settings. In Chapter 1, Lewis-Palmer outlines key features of creating and maintaining safe school environments that provide a consistent, proactive, instruction-based reconceptualization of school discipline. The second chapter focuses on extending the school-wide system into specific nonclassroom settings. Building on the school-wide foundation described in Chapter 1, Garrison-Harrell and Lewis delineate additional instructional strategies and issues unique to settings that often contain large groups of students in nonstructured activities such as supervision, the physical make-up of the setting, and routines that may contribute to unsafe situa-

tions. In Chapter 3, Wehby and Lewis provide an overview of considerations that should be factored in when extending the schoolwide system to the classroom level. In particular, the authors review current literature on the nature of teacher and student classroom interactions that may exacerbate aggressive and noncompliant behavior. The final two chapters provide guidelines in conducting functional behavioral assessments (FBAs) and developing assessment-based interventions to meet the individual needs of students who are at risk of or already engaging in chronic challenging behavior. Kern provides an overview and lists essential features in conducting an FBA and provides an exemplar of a comprehensive FBA-based strategy currently in use in the state of Pennsylvania. In the final chapter, Scott outlines how FBA can and should guide small-group and individual student interventions.

1

Developing Positive School-Wide Discipline Systems

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Schools provide students with regular, predictable, positive learning and teaching environments. They foster academic and social behavioral development and success by providing positive role models (adult and peer) and through regular positive acknowledgment. However, schools increasingly are being asked to provide these benefits while coping with decreased resources and increased demands. Budget constraints and additional initiatives place restrictions on the school's ability to address student and staff needs. Current responses to school-wide discipline may be adding to the problem (Cotton, 1995; Lewis & Sugai, 1999; Mayer, 1995; Noguera, 1995). The challenge is to create host environments that adopt and sustain effective and efficient practices that both teach and encourage appropriate behavior, discourage inappropriate behavior, and monitor the effectiveness of practices (effective behavioral support, EBS) (Colvin, Kameenui, & Sugai, 1993; Cotton, 1995; Lewis & Sugai, 1999; Sugai & Horner, 1994, in press; Taylor-Greene et al., 1997; Walker et al., 1996).

The implementation of a school-wide discipline system should focus on using research-validated practices and a systems-based approach. The foundation for implementation of a comprehensive school-wide discipline system is comprised of six components: (1) statement of purpose, (2) clearly defined expected behavior, (3) procedures for teaching expected behavior, (4) procedures for encouraging expected behavior, (5) procedures for discouraging problem behavior, and (6) procedures for record keeping and decision making (Colvin et al., 1994; Lewis & Sugai, 1999; Sugai & Horner, 1994, in press; Taylor-Greene et al., 1997). Each of these components is described in succeeding sections.

Statement of Purpose

The statement of purpose provides the explicit objective of a school-wide discipline system to establish and maintain prosocial student behaviors. In general, it creates a predictable environment that enables teachers to teach and students to learn and ensures consistency across staff and settings. There are three guidelines for developing a statement of purpose. First, it should be stated positively. Second, it should focus on all staff, students, and settings in the school building. Finally, both academic and social behavioral outcomes should be addressed. For example, a statement of purpose could be:

> The staff and students are committed to working collaboratively to provide a positive, safe, and predictable environment that encourages learning, cooperation, and respect.

Clearly Defined Expected Behavior

Defining the expected behaviors operationalizes (i.e., clarifies and defines) the statement of purpose. That is, the behavioral expectations provide the rules about desirable behaviors that facilitate teaching, learning, and the efficient operation of the discipline system. The developed expected behaviors, or rules, should (a) be limit-

ed to five or fewer, (b) be stated positively, and (c) use common and few words. For example, the following are the complete set of school expectations of one of the middle schools we have assisted: (1) "Respect others"; (2) "Respect yourself"; and (3) "Respect property." Once identified, expectations should be defined further through multiple examples of behaviors that can be taught. There are four general guidelines to follow when defining expected behaviors. First, include all staff and all students in the definitions. Second, account for all settings within the school (e.g., classroom, hallways, bathrooms, cafeteria, playground, buses, office). Third, choose examples that illustrate the range of acceptable variations (i.e., sample of possible situations). Finally, in the specific examples for each school expectation, reflect what you want students to do, not what you don't want them to do. A common process many schools use is to list all problem behaviors that are currently a concern to staff and students. For each problem behavior, a replacement behavior should be identified. The replacement should not be a simple restatement of the problem with "don't" in front of it; rather, focus on specific behaviors that can be taught that will allow students to demonstrate the larger school expectation or rule.

Procedures for Teaching Expected Behavior

The critical step in promoting a safe school environment is to directly teach expected behaviors based on the larger set of school rules. Directly teaching the rules and skills will provide a common language and a foundation for addressing the needs of all students—especially those with problem behavior. Teaching rules and skills also serves as a means of providing students who are successful an opportunity to further develop their social skills and receive positive acknowledgment. Options for teaching expected behaviors are numerous. However, there are several critical features to include in the lesson plans. These include (a) identification of the skill, (b) teaching examples, (c) student activity, and (d) practice opportunities to be implemented after the lesson.

By defining the name and purpose of the skill, students and staff are provided with a common language and means of communicating. Teaching examples emphasize the range of possible contexts, settings, and behaviors. Nonexamples are used to establish when and where a skill should not be used or to clarify the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behavior.

Students are asked to actively participate in the lesson by role playing, modeling, or engaging in class discussions. Having students actively participate in lessons provides teachers with an opportunity to assess comprehension, provide corrections, and acknowledge mastery.

Once the lessons have been taught, students should be provided with opportunities to use and practice the skills. Three activities are recommended. First, precorrections (Colvin, Sugai, & Patching, 1993) should be used to provide students with prompts immediately before difficult situations (e.g., going to recess, hallway transitions). Second, staff should remind students of expected behaviors when they notice students are not using appropriate social skills. Third, to increase the likelihood that students will use the expected behaviors, staff should acknowledge (i.e., reinforce) students for displaying appropriate behavior (Taylor-Greene et al., 1997).

Procedures for Encouraging Expected Behavior

Once behaviors have been directly taught to students, the focus shifts to maintaining the use of appropriate behavior throughout the school year. The goal should now be to provide students with the increased ability to manage their own behavior—that is, to take ownership of their behavior and to be able to apply skills to other settings and activities. Initially, students should be provided with high rates of acknowledgment for displaying expected behaviors. This may include developing a school-wide incentive program that frequently and overtly identifies students who meet expectations (Taylor-Greene et al., 1997).

Once students display the expected behavior, the intensity and regularity of acknowledgment should be shifted from staff to students to increase student independence. There are four general guidelines for shifting from initial teaching/encouraging to maintenance of skills. Acknowledgment should move from (1) tangible to social reinforcement (token to praise), (2) external to internal foci (staff to self), (3) frequent to infrequent feedback (daily to monthly), and (4) predictable to unpredictable reinforcement (every time to sometimes).

Procedures for Discouraging Problem Behavior

While the primary focus of school-wide discipline should be on teaching and encouraging expected behaviors, it is necessary to include procedures designed to respond to problem behavior. The school's task should be to clarify what behaviors should be managed in the classroom and what behaviors should be managed with assistance outside the classroom. In addition, it is paramount that *all* staff implement the procedures consistently.

Before procedures for dealing with problem behaviors are developed, problem behaviors need to be defined and classified. For example, problem behaviors can be divided into (a) classroom-managed, (b) outside-of-class or office-managed, (c) illegal, and (d) emergency or crisis. This classification can be developed into a continuum of procedures designed to respond to a wide range of problem behaviors.

Classroom-managed behaviors include minor problem behaviors (e.g., minor disruptions, noncompliance) that interfere with instruction and activities. Staff should be provided with a continuum of procedures to respond to minor problem behaviors that include steps to prevent and correct these behaviors. At the point when problem behaviors prevent instruction and activities from continuing they should be considered major (e.g., major disruption, repeated noncompliance), which then require assistance outside of the

classroom (e.g., use of a buddy teacher, office referral). Procedures for responding to major problem behaviors should include (a) making an office referral, (b) processing an office referral, (c) delivering consequences, and (d) debriefing with students and staff.

Finally, a discipline system should be developed that addresses policy and procedures for emergency or crisis situations and for handling illegal behavior. In general, emergency or crisis responses should stress safety, immediacy, and efficiency as well as thorough evaluation and debriefing after safety has been restored. It is important that all staff and students review current emergency procedures (e.g., a large fight breaks out in the hallway, there is an armed student in the building) and practice all routines in the same manner that schools routinely practice fire drills.

Procedures for Record Keeping and Decision Making

One of the most important aspects of implementing a school-wide discipline system is making decisions about (a) what has happened in the past, (b) what is currently going on, (c) whether or not something is working, and (d) what needs to be done next. To improve a school's ability to make good decisions, faculty need to develop and use a data evaluation system that will facilitate sound actions and decisions. This evaluation system must be efficient, informative, and usable (Colvin et al., 1993; Lewis-Palmer, Sugai, & Larson, in press; Skiba, Peterson, & Williams, 1997).

There are several steps to developing a system for record keeping and decision making. First, the data or information must be readily available and the procedures involved must be easy and not resource expensive. The next step is to identify a small number of questions that need to be answered. Each question should be tied directly to the school-wide discipline system and be answerable by measurable outcomes (i.e., what data, how collected, how displayed). For example, a school might monitor the number of referrals per day per month to look for patterns across the year. Another set of ques-

tions might be to identify high-risk settings (e.g., cafeteria, playground) or grade levels, or to determine what specific behaviors are a concern across settings or in classrooms (e.g., noncompliance, fighting). The final step in developing a decision-making system is to determine the steps for using the data. The school should decide when and how the data will be used (e.g., faculty meeting, bulletin board) and how often this information will be presented. Natural cycles for evaluating progress can guide decisions around data-based decision making (e.g., monthly, quarterly).

Summary

The school-wide system of EBS creates the foundation on which all other aspects of school discipline should be built. Critical activities include delineating a clear set of expectations or rules, identifying specific behavioral examples of each rule, teaching expectations, reinforcing compliance, and developing consistent and supportive measures to prevent and discourage inappropriate behavior. Success factors in using EBS to create safe schools include (a) administrative support, (b) consistent implementation across all school staff, (c) a clear emphasis on instruction and a clear expectation that all children can learn key behaviors, and (d) guiding decisions through the use of data (Lewis & Sugai, 1999).

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Extending School-Wide Systems of Support to Nonclassroom Settings

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Setting-Specific Prerequisites

Setting-specific interventions should be viewed as an extension of the larger school-wide system of disciplinary practices. Prior to intervening within problematic settings, all of the key features of implementing a school-wide effective behavioral support (EBS) system (see Chapter 1) should be developed, such as establishing a building-based team, conducting a needs assessment, developing positively stated school rules, identifying reinforcers, and developing consequences for appropriate and inappropriate behavior.

Planning

Initially, faculty time and energy will be devoted to planning and developing setting-specific lesson plans, instructional strategies, and support structures to ensure the overall of success of a school-wide plan.

Identifying Specific Behaviors and Developing Teaching Strategies

For each school rule, school personnel should identify specific example behaviors unique and common to each targeted setting. Behaviors should focus on what the students should do and be stated in positive, observable terms. It is important to avoid listing negative examples where possible; instead, use inappropriate behavior examples during instruction to illustrate what not to do. Often, students can provide valuable input on the appropriate behaviors for each setting.

Once specific behaviors are identified, the next step is to develop strategies to teach setting-specific behaviors. Ideally, behavioral expectations should be taught daily and practiced through a common set of scripted social skill lessons (Lewis & Sugai, 1999; Lewis, Sugai, & Colvin, 1998; Sugai & Lewis, 1996). Social skills should be taught by identifying when to use the skill, with demonstrations by the teacher followed by role-playing scenarios with the students, and summarizing with a review of the essential skill. In addition, following direct instruction on setting-specific skills, teachers should continue to verbally review previously taught skills. Social skills and rules should also be integrated across curricula where appropriate. For example, teachers can provide students with verbal precorrects of the expected behavior for the specific situation before the activity occurs, followed with class-wide monitoring of the target behaviors at the end of the activity.

Nelson and Colvin (1995) outlined two additional processes to assist schools with initial planning for nonclassroom settings. First, schools should identify existing and needed routines. Most schools have clearly articulated routines for events such as a fire or bomb

threat, yet they fail to address high-frequency everyday routines such as hallway transitions, entering and exiting the library and cafeteria, or use of the restrooms. Second, once current and needed routines are identified, schools should task analyze them to identify key student and staff behaviors to successfully complete the routines with minimal chance of problem behavior occurring. For example, if students are having difficulty transitioning appropriately from the playground to the classroom (e.g., hitting, yelling, pushing each other in line), the school should identify the appropriate behaviors for this activity, such as lining up when the whistle is blown and walking to the doorway with hands to their sides. Finally, strategies to teach, practice, and maintain the new routines should be developed. This might entail teachers taking their students out to recess and repeatedly practicing lining up when the whistle is blown and walking into the building quickly and quietly.

The second planning activity should focus on the physical characteristics of the setting. This includes identifying unsafe objects that can be removed or reducing physical space to ensure adequate staff supervision. At the same time, school staff must keep in mind that adequate space should be provided or students should be staggered during wait times, such as in the cafeteria or bus lines, to reduce the overall density of students (Nelson & Colvin, 1995). The outcome should focus on removing or modifying problematic features where possible or modifying routines and increasing supervision to lessen the likelihood that problem behavior will occur due to the physical make-up of the school.

Plans also should be made to provide sufficient practice of skills and strategies to promote social skill use within each targeted setting. Equally important in identification of these skills is identifying reinforcers to help shape desired behaviors. Initially, when the social skills are identified, defined, demonstrated, and role played, students will need consistent reinforcement for engaging in these desired behaviors. It is helpful for each teacher to identify individual and class-wide reinforcers that students will receive for consistently engaging in these desired behaviors. A teacher may choose to provide his or her class with a reinforcement survey to assist with

the identification of activities, events, or tangibles that the class identifies as reinforcing. Teachers can also develop classroom plans that utilize peer reinforcement. Having classmates identify peers demonstrating appropriate social skills not only reinforces the student who is demonstrating the skill, but also will prompt other students to demonstrate the skill.

The final planning activity should focus on what support structures are needed to effectively implement the plan. For example, time will need to be allocated for teachers to identify key pivotal behaviors and develop the social skills lessons. Inservice will be required to train building faculty and staff on new routines and teaching strategies. Physical rearrangement of the school environment will require accessing the appropriate personnel. Flexible teaching schedules may need to be provided to allow for adequate supervision. Finally, specific strategies should be developed to promote the use of new skills and routines directly within the setting (Colvin, Sugai, Good, & Lee, 1997; Lewis & Garrison-Harrell, in press; Lewis et al., 1998). For example, teachers would verbally prompt the students on the desired behaviors (e.g., walk quickly and quietly into the building with our hands to our sides). Staff would be expected to monitor the occurrence of the target behaviors, provide verbal praise and error correction, and provide reinforcers to encourage students' use of new routines and skills.

Implementation

Once all planning activities are completed, a structured schedule for implementation should be developed and followed. All staff should focus on teaching routines and related skills within a single setting. In addition, multiple opportunities should be provided for student practice. For example, if the targeted setting were the lunchroom, staff would first review routines for leaving the classroom, arriving in the lunchroom, lining up when requested, selecting the food items, and locating the appropriate seating arrangements. Related social skills should also be taught, such as walking in the line quietly, picking up a lunch tray, selecting food items politely, purchas-

ing milk, following the seating arrangement, eating the food politely, talking to classmates politely, returning the tray to the designated area, and exiting the cafeteria quietly. Depending upon the students' skill strengths and deficits, repeated practices might be needed on specific skills (e.g., lining up with a tray). Although, these are behaviors that all students are expected to perform on a daily basis in the cafeteria, deficits in specific skill acquisition can create chaos within the lunchroom. For instance, one school team noted that students appeared to have a difficult time exiting and entering the cafeteria. Upon further analysis of this setting, the teachers determined that the students were expected to select their lunch trays and empty their lunch trays in the same location. After changing the location of where the students emptied their trays, the inappropriate behaviors (pushing, falling into students, yelling) lessened.

Finally, teachers should practice the routines and skills with their students before those skills must actually be used. Once new routines and skills are taught and opportunities to practice are provided, staff can move to other targeted settings.

As we mentioned previously, nonclassroom settings present specific challenges in that there are often periods when there are large groups of students under the supervision of few adults and activities tend to be relatively unstructured (e.g., recess, lunch, hallway transitions). Therefore, in addition to teaching and practicing key setting behaviors, other strategies should also be implemented. First, active supervision should be ensured. Active supervision should include sufficient adult presence, movement on the part of the adults, and active interaction with students, including reinforcement and error correction (Colvin et al., 1997; Lewis, Colvin, & Sugai, in press). Second, clear routines should be established that lessen the likelihood of problem behavior, such as ensuring minimal wait time, removing barriers, and clearly identifying entrances and exits (Nelson & Colvin, 1995). Finally, crisis and emergency procedures should be planned, taught, and practiced. For example, procedures should be established to effectively and safely respond to fights, unruly crowds, and extreme emergencies such as an armed person in the building (Walker et al., 1995, 1996). In addition, uni-

versal safety precautions should be planned when assisting injured or sick children (e.g., rubber gloves, disinfectant solution).

The final component of implementation should be the establishment of a system to monitor implementation effectiveness. Ideally, direct observation of the frequency of student problem and replacement behavior should be conducted. If time does not allow staff to collect direct observation data, other strategies should be used. Strategies such as anecdotal reports from supervisory staff, the number of office referrals related to target settings, or random counts on a small group of students within the target setting could provide an index of the effectiveness of practices. If the data indicate that a plan is not working, faculty should reevaluate the plan. Additional instruction, supervision, reinforcement, and practice with feedback may be needed to improve student performance. In contrast, if data indicate that the plan is working, then it is important to continue the plan for a sufficient amount of time to ensure maintenance.

Summary

Strategies to build systems of effective behavioral support at the nonclassroom level should focus first on extending the school-wide system by teaching and practicing specific social behaviors that reflect the larger school expectations but are unique to each setting. Equally important given the nature of nonclassroom settings, active supervision, routines that promote safety, and emergency procedures should be planned and practiced. Finally, data should be collected to monitor the effectiveness of all strategies and pinpoint continued problem areas.

3

Building Effective Systems of Support at the Classroom Level

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The purpose of establishing systems of effective behavioral support (EBS) at the classroom level is not to mandate that all classrooms look the same with respect to management. Rather, teachers should clearly identify expectations and behaviors that students must possess to be successful given the unique set-up and expectations of their classrooms. These specific classroom expectations should be an extension of the larger school set of rules. In addition to clearly establishing expectations, teaching key skills, and providing opportunities to practice essential behaviors, educators should pay particular attention to their day-to-day interactions with students to avoid escalating potentially disruptive and aggressive student

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behavior. The major focus of this chapter is on understanding how teaching behaviors interact with and impact student behavior within the classroom. Suggestions for safe classrooms that lessen the likelihood of student problem behaviors are also provided.

Teacher–Student Instructional Interactions

When looking at the development and implementation of any management support system, it must be understood that actions within classrooms are interactive. As outlined by Gunter, Denny, Jack, Shores, and Nelson (1993), understanding the interactive nature of these social behaviors is an important step in the development of an EBS system. As these authors have outlined, behaviors between teachers and their students may fall broadly into two basic categories, reciprocal and coercive. Teacher–student interactions are considered to be *reciprocal* if both participants are reinforced for their participation. It is these types of positive interactions that are consistent with effective teaching strategies. An example of a reciprocal teacher–student interaction would be a teacher request followed by student compliance followed by teacher praise. In this example, the teacher is reinforced for student compliance while the student is rewarded with teacher praise. A second type of teacher–student interaction is more negative or coercive in that at least one participant is displaying a behavior that is aversive to the other participant.

Within *coercive* interactions, one participant attempts to remove himself or herself, or escape, the aversiveness of the interaction. An example of a coercive teacher–student interaction would be a teacher request followed by student noncompliance followed by teacher threat of a consequence resulting in an aggressive act by the student. In contrast to the reciprocal example, the teacher's instruction may have been viewed negatively by the student (for any number of reasons), and the student's noncompliance was an aversive behavior to the teacher. Unfortunately, as has been reported in a number of studies, these coercive interchanges often escalate

beyond simple noncompliance and threatening behavior, resulting in serious acts of aggression and disruption. Researchers have also documented a high rate of coercive interactions between students with emotional and behavioral Disorders (E/BD) and their teacher. Often, it is these coercive interactions that contribute to both the poor outcomes for students with E/BD and the high rate of burnout among teachers of this population. In the short term, these types of social exchanges have substantial impact on the daily interactions within classrooms.

The research on social interactions in classrooms has been consistent in its reports of low rates of positive, reciprocal interactions between students with problem behaviors and their teachers (e.g., Shores et al., 1993; Steinberg & Knitzer, 1992; Wehby, Symons, & Shores, 1995). This research has also been consistent in finding that if increases in teacher positive behavior occur, decreases in students' inappropriate behaviors are likely to follow. Unfortunately, the procedures we have used to increase teacher positive behavior while interacting with students have not proven to be very powerful, nor have we found that teachers maintain the positive responses over time. Part of this failure results from an inadequate understanding of the effects that coercive interactions have on teaching behavior. However, there has been speculation about how these aversive events impact the context of the classroom.

Impact of Child Behavior on Teacher Behavior

While research on parent–child relationships has shown that children actively influence the behavior of their parents (e.g., Patterson, 1982; Wahler & Dumas, 1986), the impact of students with E/BD on the behavior of other adults, including teachers, has only recently been investigated. For example, Carr, Taylor, and Robinson (1991) noted that if students continually misbehave following the delivery of a teacher instruction, this sequence might actually punish teachers for trying to provide instruction and lead to fewer instructional interactions. This type of teaching pattern has been observed in classrooms for children who have or are at risk for E/BD (Van Acker et al., 1996; Wehby et al., 1995). The aversive responses by students

may have other implications. The delivery of potential punishing behavior by students in response to teacher instruction may set in motion the potential for escape and avoidance behaviors by the teacher. As we have suggested, a teacher–student interaction may consist of the teacher's instructional command followed by the child's noncompliance. This seemingly unimportant sequence may lead to subsequent teacher commands, ending in an escalation of student misbehavior (e.g., aggression toward teachers, properties, or peers). This interchange, frequently observed in classrooms with high rates of problem behavior, may lead to escape and avoidance behaviors by teachers (Gunter, Jack, DePaepe, Reed, & Harrison, 1994). That is, teachers may terminate interactions with a student (or a particular group of students) by placing the student in time out, removing him or her from the classroom, or simply avoiding any direct contact with the student. This suggestion is supported by current research that shows that students who engage in high rates of problem behavior engage in fewer instructional interactions with their teachers when compared with other students (Carr et al., 1991; Wehby, Symons, Canale, & Go, 1998).

A second potential source of aversive stimuli may be found in the inconsistent behavior shown by some students with E/BD and the inconsistent reactions shown by teachers to these behaviors. That is, the significant academic, behavioral, and emotional characteristics of these students result in behavior that often appears unpredictable. By teacher inconsistency, we mean that appropriate behavior (and inappropriate behavior) is sometimes rewarded and at other times is ignored or even punished. If this inconsistency is indeed aversive, it may be likely that teachers and students will engage in escape and avoidance behaviors. Van Acker and colleagues (1996) found that the most predictable sequence of teacher–student interactions occurred during episodes of teacher reprimands for inappropriate behavior by students at risk for aggressive behavior. These data support the results of other studies that have shown that many students with E/BD receive teacher attention primarily for inappropriate behavior and that other opportunities for interaction are less apparent (Carr et al., 1991).

The descriptive studies just cited indicate that students with E/BD receive scant positive social responses from their teachers and that many of the interactions between students with E/BD and their teachers can best be described as inconsistent and frequently coercive. The aversive situations described above may be a significant factor in the high rate of burnout among teachers who are forced to deal with daily problem behavior. There are a number of reasons why coercive interactions are often seen in classrooms that have high rates of problem behavior. As suggested by Shores and colleagues (1993), the negative behaviors shown by teachers in response to problem behavior typically work in the short term. That is, when a teacher uses a coercive behavior (e.g., threat) to terminate a child's misbehavior, it usually results in the termination of the inappropriate behavior. However, over time, it is likely that these short-term solutions result in escalated problem behavior and the occurrence of escape and avoidance behaviors by teachers and students. As noted by Shores and colleagues (1993) and others (e.g., Gunter et al., 1994), it is necessary for researchers and practitioners alike to concentrate on ways to increase the positive, reciprocal interactions within classrooms while reducing the number of coercive interactions that occur.

Historically, there have been numerous suggestions for guiding teachers in the management of student behavior as well as their own. For over 30 years, the classroom management literature has been replete with sound recommendations regarding the use of classroom rules, physical arrangement, teacher proximity, and external reinforcers (e.g., token systems). While procedural guidelines for each of these procedures can be found in most behavior management texts, it has been suggested that the poor implementation of these procedures may contribute to the aversive nature of many classrooms and may occasion some of the coercive sequences described previously (Gunter et al., 1994; Shores et al., 1993). That is, these systems often operate on the presence or absence of inappropriate behavior and, as currently implemented, fail to acknowledge positive behavior. For example, if rules are stated negatively (e.g., "Do not talk out"), the teacher may only recognize (give atten-

tion to) the student when the student talks out and inadvertently ignore an appropriate handraising by the student. Again, responding to a negative behavior with a negative behavior creates the potential for escalation and a more serious infraction.

It is has been our experience that teachers often fail to recognize their roles in the initiation or continuation of these coercive interactions. As we stated previously, it is the apparent unpredictable nature of students with E/BD that may cause teachers to fall into these patterns. Whatever the reason, it is clear that teachers need to be made aware of these potential pitfalls and shown ways to develop methods for identifying their own behavior patterns in order to maintain a consistent set of responses to student misbehavior. We are not suggesting that this is an easy endeavor; it is one that requires an ongoing, long-term commitment to change and the maintenance of change. We believe the EBS model can provide systematic support for this type of change.

Role of EBS in the Classroom

While there remains a need for consistently implementing the larger school-wide set of expectations and predictable responses to behavior, teachers are encouraged to extend the school-wide system to meet their individual teaching styles and class needs. In addition, teachers should tap into resources made available through team-based implementation of EBS to assist them in recognizing possible coercive patterns of interactions. (See the next chapter for specific assessment strategies to undertake this task.)

Classroom teachers should also extend the overall approach of the EBS system to their classroom management systems and classroom set-ups. That is, teachers should not assume that students will know what to do in the classroom; rather, they should be prepared to teach and practice the skills that are necessary for success. Thus, the middle school teacher who would like students to bring all materials to class, work with academic partners, and turn in work in a unique manner should spend time throughout the school year teaching these expectations. It is not sufficient to simply tell the students what you want; you have to teach, practice, and periodically review.

Classroom teachers also may want to involve their students in establishing classroom expectations and outcomes. It is important to shape such discussions so that the students will also apply a teaching approach. For example, a teacher can ask students how they learned key social skills. Or the teacher can present the problem-solving scenario of a new student entering the school and ask the students to generate ideas on how they would make sure the new student is aware of and has opportunities to practice the school's expected behaviors.

Summary

There are two major considerations to keep in mind at the classroom level to promote safe schools. First, the classroom should reflect the larger school-wide system with respect to rules, behavioral expectations, and an emphasis on teaching appropriate behavior. Second, careful consideration should be given to the nature of teacher–student interactions in the classroom. While it is clear that teachers do not intentionally set students up to escalate behavior, research on classroom interactions—particularly special education placements that serve students with E/BD, indicate that students often enter school with a predisposition toward negative interaction patterns. In the course of instruction, teachers often set the occasion for coercive interactions that unfortunately lead to potentially unsafe situations. A thorough functional assessment and functional-based intervention are necessary to ensure that students learn appropriate alternatives to current coercive interactions (see the final two chapters of this monograph).

4

Addressing Challenging Behaviors at the Individual Student Level: Functional Behavioral Assessment

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In recent years, the process of functional assessment has emerged as an alternative approach to addressing the challenges of children and adolescents with behavioral difficulties. This approach diverges from strategies commonly used in the past in that interventions are dependent on a thorough understanding of the array of environmental and physiologic variables that may influence whether or not problematic behavior occurs. Armed with this understanding, support strategies can be developed that have three important elements. First, antecedent strategies can be implemented that reduce the likelihood that a particular behavior will occur. Second, alterna-

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tive skills can be developed that can potentially replace the problematic behavior. Finally, consequences delivered following the behavior can be arranged so that they are least likely to inadvertently cause the behavior to continue.

Over the past decade, the effectiveness of this approach with individuals with emotional and behavioral disorders (E/BD) have been demonstrated in the literature (Dunlap et al., 1993; Kern, Childs, Dunlap, Clarke, & Falk, 1994; Umbreit, 1995). In fact, the 1997 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act embraced a "functional behavioral" approach to assessment and behavior plan development. Thus, it is logical that we continue to examine not only effective and efficient strategies for implementing this approach, but also means to broaden and extend it across systems and to an array of challenging behaviors.

Developing Functional Assessment-Based Support Plans

There are two primary assumptions underlying a functional approach to challenging behavior. The first is that challenging behavior serves a useful purpose for an individual. In other words, in the past a particular behavior has in some way allowed an individual's needs to be met. Thus, the behavior is *functional* for the individual. This assumption explains the succession of such problems. The second assumption of a functional approach is that challenging behaviors are related to the context in which they occur. With few exceptions, problematic behavior does not occur habitually, nor is it isolated with respect to one's environment. Although it is often difficult to identify the precise and complex factors that contribute to the occurrence (or nonoccurrence) of challenging behavior, it has been well established that contextual variables (both immediate and distal) determine the probability that a particular behavior will occur. These assumptions have resulted in the evolution of our approach to behavior management so that it underscores the importance of developing an understanding of *why* problematic behavior occurs. A functional assessment offers a strategy for determining

why behaviors do or do not occur. Such information is essential for developing intervention and support strategies that result in long-term behavior change.

Conducting a Functional Assessment

Throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, a five-step approach to functional behavioral assessment has been adopted (Bambara & Knoster, 1995). Step 1 is to *conduct a functional assessment.* The purpose of this step is to gather sufficient information to determine variables that are associated with occurrences and nonoccurrences of problematic behavior. A wide range of variables may be considered, including physiologic or psychological events (e.g., allergies, mental illness, health), establishing operations (e.g., lack of sleep, fight with a peer, medications), and immediate antecedents (e.g., difficult assignment, teacher reprimand). In addition, an individual's strengths and weaknesses should be identified, including communication and social skills. Finally, determining an individual's likes and dislikes is essential to developing a support plan that considers quality-of-life issues. Several strategies have been used to collect information pertinent to a functional assessment. One is the interview. A variety of structured interviews are commercially available. Interviews solicit information regarding variables associated with the problematic behavior, either from people familiar with the relevant individual or from the individual himself or herself. A second information-gathering strategy is direct observation. Several formats for collecting direct observation data have been used in the past. The essential features they have in common is that they document events both antecedent and subsequent to the behavior. A final assessment source is archival information. An array of information is typically documented in a student's school records. This may include traumatic events, office referrals, successful or unsuccessful interventions implemented in the past, and so on. The sum of information gathered during the functional assessment should offer insight into circumstances that are frequently associated with problematic behavior and those that are rarely associated with problematic behavior.

Once sufficient assessment information is gathered, Step 2 can be conducted. This step is to *develop hypothesis statements*—informed assumptions about why the behavior is occurring. Hypothesis statements should include antecedent and setting events as well as the presumed function of the behavior. These may be global, in that they identify broad explanations for behavior (e.g., medical issues, learning problems, social deficits) or specific, in that they clarify more immediate events associated with the behavior (e.g., difficult assignment, left alone).

Step 3 is to *design a behavioral support plan.* It is critical that the support plan directly reflect information pertinent to the previous two steps. In other words, support plans should be directly linked to hypotheses established in Step 2, which were based on information resulting from Step 1. Support plans should contain at least four components. The first is antecedent or setting event strategies. These strategies are designed to either prevent behaviors from occurring or increase desired behaviors. The second component is alternative skill instruction. Alternative skills should be taught that serve the same function as the problematic behavior but are socially and contextually appropriate. The third component is consequent strategies. Consequent strategies should delineate procedures for responding to problematic behavior in ways that are likely to result in future reductions in the behavior. Finally, support plans should contain long-term prevention plans that consider approaches for providing extended support in order to maintain reductions in problematic behavior over the long term.

Step 4 is to *evaluate the effectiveness of the support plan.* It is important that this be done over an extended period of time and along several dimensions. First, problematic behaviors should decrease to levels at which they no longer interfere with an individual's functioning and well-being. If rapid reductions are not anticipated, a downward trend at a reasonable rate should be observed. In addition, alternative skills, which are important for long-term gains should be increasing. Finally, the plan should result in meaningful outcomes for the individual. This means that his or her quality of life has positively improved as a result of the support plan.

Step 5 is to *modify the support plan as needed.* Information indicating the efficacy of the support plan that was obtained during Step 4 should allow parents, practitioners, and others to determine its adequacy. If it is determined that progress is not adequate, then the support plan should be modified. This may require gathering additional assessment information and revising hypotheses.

Collaboration Across Systems of Care

A current limitation of service delivery, particularly to the students who are most at risk for engaging in unsafe behavior, is the lack of coordination across systems of care. Children and adolescents with E/BD often are eligible for and in need of an array of services. For example, individuals may receive support from mental health agencies, child protective service agencies, alcohol and drug services, juvenile probation, and others. These agencies traditionally have provided their services in an autonomous manner. Specifically, each system of care has its own mechanism for delivering services (e.g., individualized education program, individual treatment plan, individual family service plan). This approach to service delivery has a high likelihood of leading to inefficiency and fragmentation. Services may be duplicated or misdirected, with the result that they are not focused on accomplishing acute and common goals.

To enhance service delivery for individuals with E/BD, we have developed an alternative model (Kern & Hess, 1998). The model combines three unique features. The first is that an integrated array of services and programs are provided across school, home, and community environments. The mechanism for provision of these services is a comprehensive support plan. The comprehensive support plan is developed and implemented collaboratively and replaces the plans independently developed by service agencies.

A second feature of this model is that systems of care work conjointly to ensure that services are goal directed and progress is measured. A core community team is established consisting of the child and his or her family and representatives from service agen-

cies. This team conjointly identifies and prioritizes the child's and family's needs. Based on these identified needs, goals are established. Clearly articulated and established goals allow progress to be measured. Consequently, if goals are not being met, remedial actions can be taken, leading to continuous quality improvement. Placing the responsibility with a core community team allows the child, family, and community to use natural supports as well as formal systems while the child retains full community membership.

The third feature of this model is that all support plans are formulated based on the results of a comprehensive functional assessment. As we described earlier, interventions derived from functional assessments are more effective and efficient than non-assessment-based interventions. A functional assessment provides essential information that allows support plans to include proactive intervention strategies as well as skills that need to be taught.

The model we have discussed is based on the premise that the responsibility for providing the opportunity for growth and fulfillment in a safe environment lies with society. Communities can best meet the needs of individuals and their families through collaborative and unified support based on state-of-the-art strategies. In addition, quality assurance can be achieved only through careful monitoring of services and outcomes.

Summary

Functional assessment has emerged as a potent and powerful process in the course of providing behavioral support. In the past decade, the applicability of this process has been demonstrated with students with E/BD. In addition, guidelines and practical approaches for conducting a functional assessment have been developed. In spite of the strength of these procedures, continued evaluation is needed in a number of areas including collaborative implementation across service systems, applicability across diverse challenging behaviors, and broad adoption and utilization.

5

Creating Individual Student Interventions Based on Functional Behavioral Assessment

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As a general rule, effective intervention is predicated on two critical steps. First, teachers must determine which behaviors are worthy of intervention. Intervention typically is seen as a necessary step when a student's behaviors significantly disrupt their own or their peers' ability to learn, create a safety hazard, or impact the potential for that student to maintain successful social interactions and relationships. This issue is referred to as *social validity,* and it must be judged by teachers, other adults, and other children in the environment in accordance with the norms and criteria for success in that environment. Second, once problem behaviors have been identified for intervention, information regarding the predictability and purpose of the problem behaviors must be assessed via a functional

assessment (see Chapter 4). When we know the contexts in which behaviors are likely to occur, we have the opportunity to prevent those behaviors. Likewise, if we can understand why behaviors occur, we can help the student to meet his or her needs by teaching and reinforcing more appropriate behaviors.

In this chapter, I will discuss the critical steps and decisions that comprise effective individualized intervention programs. Issues of social validity and functional assessment are assumed throughout this discussion, so that emphasis may be placed upon planning, teaching, and facilitating success in the natural environment.

Planning Intervention

When the predictability and purpose of a behavior have been determined via the functional assessment process, we have information as to when (under what conditions) and why a behavior occurs. At this point, we need to determine what behaviors we would like to see from students under these conditions (i.e., replacement behaviors) and how we might go about teaching those behaviors.

Functional Replacement Behaviors

In the simplest terms, we want to replace an undesirable behavior with a desirable behavior that will serve the same function (i.e., purpose) for the student. To accomplish this we need to (a) select an appropriate functional replacement behavior, (b) directly teach that behavior, and (c) facilitate access to the same functional outcome for the student. For example, if we determine that a student engages in tantruming and aggressive behavior to get the attention of the teacher, we must teach the student more appropriate behaviors for accessing the same outcome. Likewise, if we determine that the student engages in tantruming and aggressive behavior to escape unpleasant interactions with peers, we must teach the student more appropriate behaviors for escaping such situations—as well as behaviors for initiating and sustaining positive interactions.

Although the student's tantruming and aggressive behaviors may be topographically identical, their functions may be quite different,

and thus the appropriate replacements will be different. This illustrates the need for individualized replacement behaviors based on functional assessment. Functional replacement behaviors will be effective only when they are more effective and efficient at meeting the student's needs. That is, if we teach a student to sit quietly with her hands over her mouth when annoyed by peers and this does not remove the annoyance, there is no incentive for her to engage in this behavior and little hope that the replacement behavior will maintain. Conversely, if we teach a student to raise his hand to get attention from the teacher, he is able to access that desired attention and is likely to maintain that behavior in the future, as long as it continues to be effective (i.e., continues to gain access to attention).

Instructional Intervention

The issue of effective instruction for students with challenging behavior is related to the effectiveness of both academic instruction and social instruction. Research has demonstrated that interventions focusing solely on either academic or social instruction are ineffective (e.g., Carr et al., 1991). Behavioral interventions must focus on the student's successful performance across school settings and demands.

Effective Academic Instruction

When instruction is designed to maximize the likelihood of success and minimize errors in acquiring targeted skills, students are more likely to enjoy the activity. A student who is successful in and enjoys an activity has little incentive to disrupt the class or act in ways that would precipitate his or her escape or exclusion from that activity. This indicates a need for better instructional practices with disruptive students; however, Carr and colleagues (1991) found that teachers actually provide less instruction to these students, which makes it difficult to engage them in learning activities.

Research has demonstrated that the instructional methodologies that maximize the probability of student success are those that directly teach skills to students via the presentation of clear rules,

teacher modeling, and guided practice—techniques known as *direct instruction.* Direct instruction methodologies developed with the specific purpose of minimizing errors during skill acquisition are commonly referred to as *errorless learning* procedures (Wolery, Bailey, & Sugai, 1988) and have been found to minimize disruptive and aggressive behaviors (e.g., Nelson, Johnson, & Marchand-Martella, 1996). Large-scale studies and meta-analyses of the literature clearly demonstrate the superiority of direct instruction procedures in facilitating success in students (Engelmann, Becker, Carnine, & Gersten, 1988; Forness, Kavale, Blum, & Lloyd, 1997). For students who exhibit challenging behaviors and associated learning difficulties, academic success has not come naturally. The success of these students must be facilitated and is largely dependent upon a sound curriculum and systematic, teacher directed instruction.

Teaching Social Behaviors in the Same Manner as Academics

The research-based principles and procedures of direct instruction apply to social behaviors in the same manner as they do to academics. That is, the basic tenets of teacher modeling, example selection, guided practice, and reinforcement are identical for both academic and social instruction. Key to the effectiveness of instruction is a clear understanding of the requisite skills that make up complex behaviors. For example, teaching a student to perform long division requires that the student have existing skills in the areas of place value, subtraction, and multiplication. In the absence of fluency in these areas, no amount of instruction in long division will be successful. Instruction must focus on the specific skills that predict success. Social instruction (i.e., teaching nonacademic behaviors) can be thought of in exactly the same way. Instruction will be effective only when the behaviors being taught are specific replacements for existing problem behaviors or student-held misrules.

Social Skills Instruction. Most school personnel are familiar with the concept of social skills instruction. Research supports the efficacy of direct instruction of social skills as a best practice for students

with challenging behavior (Lipsey, 1991). Reviews of the literature indicate that social skills instruction is most effective when (a) students are taught in groups of five to eight; (b) problem scenarios and appropriate replacement behaviors are selected from the natural environment; (c) key skills are modeled by the teacher; (d) students have an opportunity to practice skills with teacher feedback; (e) students are reinforced when desired behavior is exhibited in the natural environment; and (f) the environment is set up to predict success (Sugai & Lewis, 1996). Although research clearly suggests that social skills instruction has not produced successful generalized outcomes (i.e., skills transfer to other environments), the components of the direct instruction model for teaching social skills includes best practices for facilitating generalized responding.

Environmental Manipulations

Despite effective student instruction, replacement behaviors are not likely to replace functionally undesirable behaviors automatically. The initial demonstration and eventual maintenance of replacement behaviors will depend upon the student's perception of effectiveness in meeting his or her needs. Because of this, replacement behaviors initially require prompting and guidance to ensure that they are being undertaken at the appropriate time and in the appropriate manner. This process can be considered a further piece of instruction in that it is calculated to ensure student success.

The student's perception of the success of the replacement behavior will depend upon its consequences. That is, if a replacement behavior does not meet the student's needs (i.e., it fails to result in an effective outcome), it is unlikely that the student will persist in using that behavior. Instead, the undesirable behavior, which historically has been reliable in meeting those needs, will continue to occur. For this reason, initial replacement behaviors need to be simple, guided with prompts, and immediately reinforced when observed. Over time, replacement behaviors can be shaped toward more sophisticated responses and/or to occur for longer durations.

Initially, however, we must focus on facilitating any successful demonstration of replacement behavior and providing immediate reinforcement using functionally equivalent reinforcers.

Even as we identify functional replacement behaviors and facilitate their success through instruction, events will occur in the environment that may hasten the return of undesirable behaviors by making those behaviors easier or more efficient in meeting the student's needs. To facilitate desired behaviors under conditions that are highly predictive of undesired behaviors, it is necessary to alter the environment to mask or minimize those conditions.

Arranging the classroom and/or positioning students to avoid the potential for disruption is the simplest way for teachers to manipulate the environment. Caréful functional assessment of student behavior may indicate specific times, circumstances, or placements that predict problem behaviors. Arrangements such as increasing space between student desks, providing sufficient areas for moving from one setting to another, and removing problematic or otherwise distracting stimuli can help to preclude predictable patterns of undesirable behavior. For example, if we know that name-calling is highly predictive of a student's aggressive behaviors, preventing name-calling as much as possible serves to facilitate success. The teacher might speak with the other students and offer group reinforcement contingent upon appropriate conversations (without name-calling and insults) for all students in the class.

Summary

Successful intervention is dependent upon valid assessment and planning procedures. First and foremost, interventions must be planned to teach functional replacement behaviors (based on functional assessment) and helping students to meet their individual needs in the natural environment. Second, teachers must provide effective instruction in replacement behaviors, using errorless learning techniques to facilitate student success and increase the probability of appropriate responses in the future. Finally, if we are

to have any hope of changing student behaviors outside of the instructional setting, attention must be paid to facilitating success in natural environments via antecedent manipulations and immediate consequences for desired and undesired behaviors. Only when replacement behaviors become efficient and effective in meeting the needs of students will those behaviors persist.

Conclusion

The task of creating safe schools is daunting, yet possible. The purpose of this monograph was to outline features of a school-wide system of effective behavioral support designed to increase school capacity to meet the needs of at-risk children and youth. Specifically, the focus throughout has been on prevention and early intervention through instruction-based interventions. Based on best practice, several common themes have emerged that are critical to the success of any plan.

- Schools should not assume that children and youth know what is expected of them and/or have the prerequisite social skills to meet the demands of school and the larger society.
- Educators must clearly delineate what is expected of children and youth, as well as of themselves, and enforce expectations consistently.
- Educators must teach children and youth critical social skills to comply with school expectations. At minimum, educators should *tell* the students what the skill looks like, *show* them what it looks like, and *practice, practice, practice.*
- Educators should implement a continuum of interventions based on student need. The more severe or chronic the behavior, the more intense the intervention must be.
- Educators should base intervention and instructional decisions on assessment data collected within the school. At the school-

wide level, broad indices such as office referrals and behavioral incidence reports can be used. In order to meet the needs of students who engage in chronic challenging behavior, thorough functional behavioral assessments should be conducted.

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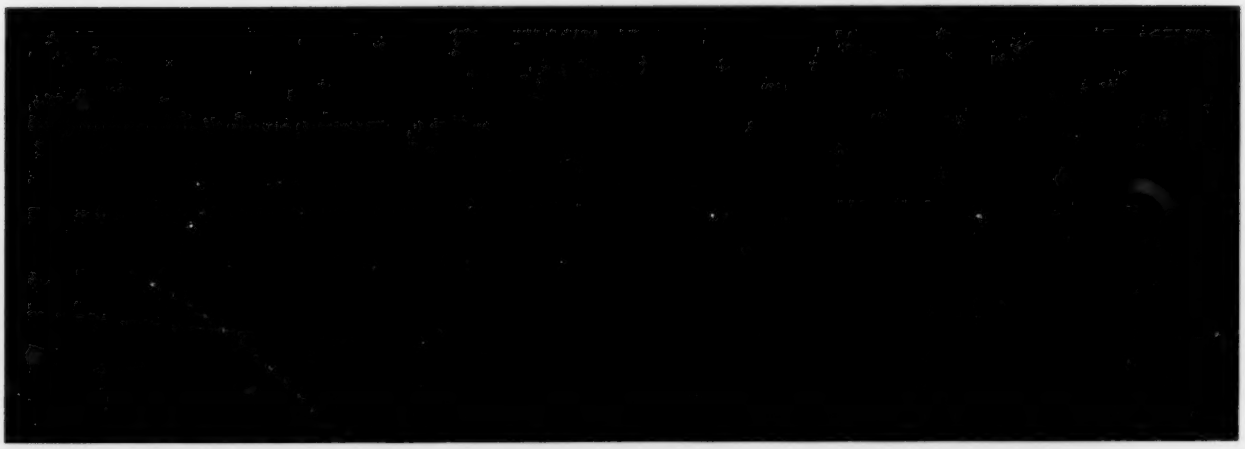

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